

Tavern Talk

Spring 2007, Volume 2, Issue 1

You've walked the walk, now you can talk the talk.



The Rock – Lost and Found: A Story

If it hadn't been for the persistence of local history buffs Joyce Drake, Gladys Saborio, and Dan Cherry, the rock might have been lost forever; and without the efforts of the Irish Hills community this historical marker could not have been rededicated last September. Here's the story...

September 11, 1922, the Daughters of the American Revolution (the DAR) dedicated a rock and plaque to mark the intersection of the Old Chicago Road and the Monroe Pike (now US 12 and M-50). These two roads are central to the story of Michigan history and the westward migration of settlers. The marker commemorates the historical importance of this junction and of Walker Tavern, the stagecoach stop that welcomed travelers at these crossroads. In the early 1970s, US 12 was widened and the marker removed from its spot at the intersection.



For almost 40 years the historic marker was lost, but not forgotten. When Walker Tavern's site historian, Cheryl Valentine, first came to Walker two years ago, Joyce, Gladys and Dan made sure she heard the story of the lost marker and understood its significance to the community. They kept the story alive. One day, Mary Jo Remensnyder, a sharp-eyed visitor, was walking along the treeline just west of Walker Tavern and exclaimed, "What's that big boulder?" The rock was found in the woody brush at the edge of the mowed lawn and identified by the distinct indentation where the plaque had been. A call to the Michigan Historical Museum's collections unit located the plaque on a computerized inventory and it was soon delivered back to Walker Tavern. The next question was how to get the three ton rock back in position. Volunteers from neighboring MIS came to the rescue, moved the rock, and set it upright. Then Jeff Fineske, a local concrete worker, reattached the plaque to the rock.

September 16, 2006, 84 years after the first dedication of the rock, over 100 people gathered at Walker Tavern Historic Site to celebrate the rededication of this historic marker. In a ceremony that mirrored the initial one in 1922, speeches were given, songs were sung, and the historic significance of the moment was noted. Ellen Hicks, representing the Lucy Wolcott Barnum chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), talked about the DAR's role in preserving history and establishing historic markers. Five descendants of those present at the

original 1922 ceremony participated in the rededication. Pam and Dan Cherry, descendants of Miss Louise Ladd, and Dave Baldwin, Clark F. Baldwin and Clark O. Baldwin, descendants of Mrs. C.E. Baldwin, each took a corner of the American flag that draped the rock, and lifted it to unveil the plaque.



Friends Get Organized

Thirty-three enthusiastic supporters braved the February cold to come to Walker Tavern Historic Site to dream about what it could become and talk about what they could do to help.

The soon-to-be-updated Visitors Center came alive with ideas and enthusiasm. Each attendee expressed his or her personal vision for the site. It soon became evident that with so many talented and creative individuals willing to help, there would be some exciting developments at the Walker Site. Projects discussed by the newly formed Friends of Walker Tavern included a gift shop, a farmers market, a new roof for the barn, construction of a full-sized working stagecoach, the development of new educational programs, the creation of a signature fund-raising event, and the planting of orchards and a garden to be used in historical interpretation.

Volunteers are needed to help in Hospitality, Education, Site Improvement and Fundraising categories. Hospitality volunteers will welcome visitors to the site, organize and staff the gift shop, and help with visitor information at special events. Education volunteers may research the history of Walker and the Irish Hills, demonstrate traditional crafts, lead programs, or learn to do costumed interpretation. Volunteers in Site Improvement might work to spruce up the site or on one of the new interpretive elements, such as the Farmers Market or Stagecoach display. The fund-raising and special events committee will look for creative ways to fund all these projects.

Phil Kwiatkowski, Director of the Michigan Historical Museum System, discussed the Master Plan developed for Walker Tavern Site which includes updating visitors services, new exhibits interpreting the history of travel along US 12, the construction of three hiking trails, and, perhaps the most ambitious, moving Walker Tavern back from the road so that it regains its front porch. Dilla Miller, a Walker Tavern volunteer, reported on the accomplishments of over 250 volunteers at Walker Tavern in the past year. Projects completed include the construction of the Frank Bolak Heritage Walkway by area Boy Scouts, the planting of historic herb and flower gardens by master gardeners from Hidden Lake, and the reinstallation of the historic marker at the crossroads.

To learn more about joining the Friends of Walker Tavern and our volunteer program, contact Cheryl Valentine at 517-467-4401.

Recipe Corner

Ginger ale, root beer, sarsaparilla, and birch beer were first drunk for their medicinal properties. Sometimes considered Temperance beverages, they were also served as an alternative to alcoholic drinks. Below is a root beer recipe taken from *Dr. Chase's Family Physician and Second Receipt Book*, first published in 1865. Dr. Chase was an Ann Arbor resident.

Root Beer

An excellent Root Beer containing all of the alternative properties of sarsaparilla and sassafras, with the nice aroma (flavor) of the wintergreen is made as follows:

Sarsaparilla root, and sassafras bark (dry), of each ½ lb.; wintergreen leaf and stem, 3 ozs.; yeast ½ pt.; molasses, 1 ½ gals.; water, 16 gals.; or enough to fill a common strong beer-barrel, if for draft, if not, bottle.

Bruse the roots, bark, and eaves, and boil, to get the strength, in 5 gals. of water; then strain into the keg if not to be bottled, and add the molasses; and when cooled, to 65 degrees or 60, put in the yeast and let stand 2 hours, when the keg is to be filled with the balance of the water.

Try making a batch of homemade root beer, or for a real taste treat, pick up a bottle of Walker Tavern Root Beer. Walker Tavern Root Beer is being produced by Michigan Brewing Company in Webberville.

Walker Mercantile to Open

New this summer, visitors to Walker Tavern Historic Site can shop The Walker Mercantile. The Mercantile is an old-fashioned store with things you might have found in a roadside shop along the Old Chicago Road. Handcrafted items include soaps, candles, jams, patchwork pillows, and toys. There'll be souvenirs, postcards and luggage tags reflecting Walker's heritage as a travel destination.

The Walker Mercantile is a project of the Friends of Walker Tavern and all sales benefit the museum's educational programs.

Walker Mercantile will open May 25, the same date Walker opens for the season.

Student Designs Label



What's a tavern without a brew? Michael Caterina, a student at Everett High School in Lansing, poses above with his label design for Walker Tavern Root Beer. Michael is a member of Viking Designs, a student run service-learning project. Students in this unique class learn graphic design skills and software, as well as business and presentation skills. They use what they've learned to provide design services for non-profit organizations.

The students at Viking Designs have created promotional flyers and posters for the Civil War Weekend and Car Shows at Walker Tavern and a Power Point presentation for Michigan Historical Museum, as well as many other projects for non-profit organizations who might not otherwise be able to afford graphic design services.

NEW & RENEWING FRIENDS

Thank you to new and renewing members of the Friends of Michigan History, Walker Tavern Chapter. Your membership dues support educational programs at Walker Tavern.

12th South Carolina -
4th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Inc.
Cletus and Jackie Brooks
Bruce and Barbara Browne
Citizens for Independence
Richard and Merrill Evans
Charlene Goebel
Ted and Paula Hewitt
Bryan and Debra Howay
Robert Kellum
Daniel and Dilla Miller
Oh These Irish Hills!
Ronald Ryan
Vey and Cheryl Valentine

Volunteers Make It Happen



Claudia Miller, a graduate of the Master Gardener Course at Hidden Lake Gardens, puts the finishing touches on a container garden for the front porch of the Visitors Center.

From restoring historic landscapes to moving rocks and from sharing lost arts to answering visitors' questions, volunteers are essential to Walker Tavern Historic Site. We couldn't do what we do without them. Here you see some of our volunteers in action.



Dilla Miller role-plays a settlement era hostess welcoming guests to a Pioneer Tea, a Wednesday at Walker event.



Volunteers **Ed Brown** and Columbia Central Key Club member, **Spencer Schirmacher**, demonstrate the use of draw knife and shaving horse.



Ian Natzmer encourages a hoop racer at Walker Frontier Fest.



CALL
For information
on becoming a
Walker Tavern
volunteer
517-467-4401.

Dr. Roger Bloomer, of Foote Family Medical in Brooklyn, was ready to help out in case of injuries at the Civil War battle reenactment last year.



Volunteers **Joyce Drake**, **Dila Miller** and **Ni Gordon** decorate a holiday tree with items they've crafted.



Julianna Frost leads a discussion on what to take and what to leave behind in a Pack Your Wagon program she developed.



You are never too young to volunteer at Walker as **Madeleine Cherney** shows.



Lois Lane demonstrates the lost art of spinning at Walker Frontier Fest.



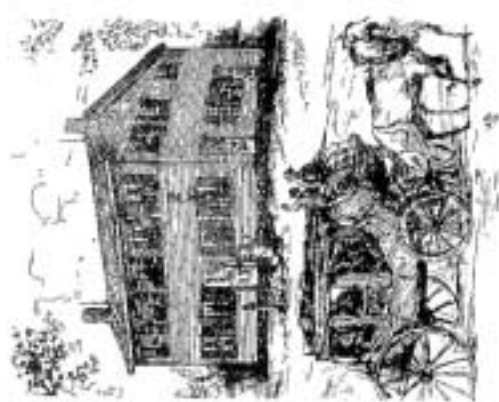
Walker Tavern Historic Site

Walker Tavern Historic Site
13220 M-50
Brooklyn, MI 49230

From stagecoaches to automobiles, Walker Tavern stands at the crossroads of travel history. What was it like to travel by stagecoach from Detroit to Chicago in the 1840s? What attracted tourists to the Irish Hills in the 1920s? Why did Walker Tavern change

from a stagecoach stop to farm, and then to tourist attraction? How did it become a state historic park? Who stopped at these crossroads and why were they important to the history of tourism and travel in Michigan? Native Americans, explorers, surveyors, road builders, settlers, land speculators, politicians, preachers, runaway slaves, artists, musicians, writers, bootleggers, bandits, and flappers are among the colorful array of people who have passed by these crossroads. They traveled by foot, by wagon, on horseback and by automobile.

Visit Walker Tavern Historic Site at the intersection of US 12 and M-50 and "experience" travel then and now. Climb aboard a stagecoach and imagine riding by stage twelve hours over rutted dirt roads. Come into the tavern where weary travelers rested from their journey. Read first-hand accounts of Walker Tavern during the first half of the 20th century when popular stories about celebrity visits and murdered strangers enticed motorists from Detroit and other urban centers to this popular roadside attraction. Picnic, hike and relax at Walker Tavern where history hits the road.



2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Civil War Weekend

Sat. and Sun., June 9 & 10

Tractors at the Tavern

Sat. and Sun., July 14 & 15

Walker on Wheels

Sat., August 4

Walker Frontier Fest

Sat., September 1

Programs for Adult/Child Partners

Spaces are limited. Reservations and fees required.
Call 517-467-4401

It's For the Birds!

Sat., May 5, 1 - 4 P.M.

Wednesdays at Walker - 1 - 3 P.M.

Civil War Role-play - June 6

Life on the Farm - June 20

Pack Your Wagon - July 11

Pioneer Tea - July 25

Keeping Family History - August 8

Intro to Weaving - August 22

Contact Information

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Tavern Talk is a publication of Walker Tavern Historic Site. Walker Tavern is one of eleven museums and historic sites that form the Michigan Historical Museum System under the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries.